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THE RED CROSS

IN CHARGE OF

JANE A. DELANO, R.N.

Chairman of the National Committee on Nursing Service

AT THE BEGINNING OF 1918

We have seen hundreds of nurses go out for their foreign service, calm and clear-eyed, prepared for any hardship, any sacrifice, for any length of time that the war may last, under strict orders of obedience, like good soldiers. With this in one's memory it is gratifying to take up a random copy of the *Boston Transcript* and read from one who has lived in France for many years, of the landing there of a unit of our Red Cross nurses. Their first night in this seaport town, they were domiciled in a convent of nuns of St. Vincent de Paul, which was attached to a hospital under the *Societe de Secours aux Blesses Militaires*.

It was still early when supper was over. Some went out in groups and strolled about the town, but everyone went to bed early, tired with the excitement and the strain of the voyage across. Then it was that the scampering began in earnest. Towels, baths, hot water, cold water, open windows, healthy drafts,—the nuns were at their wits' end, but as happy as could be. Soon every girl seemed to be sitting next to her own bed, busily rummaging in suit cases and valises. When I left them the evening shadows were fast drawing around. Through the convent windows the lurid red light from the western sky, where the sun was going down in a blaze of copper and gold, lit up the dark oaken staircase where girlish figures were flitting up and down in pink kimonos or blue bathrobes, their hair hanging in glorious masses on their shoulders, holding towels and soap with an "Isn't it too strange to be true?" look on their faces, and hastening to the washstands where, only a few weeks before, I used to scrub my hands before going to undo some badly wounded poilu's bandages * * *

The next day the Red Cross nurses rose early and soon spread over the town where their blue suits and capes, the red lining flung over the left shoulder, attracted great attention * * * The big engine puffed and started. A whistle sounded from somewhere and in the gathering gloom the train bearing the first American Red Cross unit entitled to wear the magic bronze letters "U. S." sped away on its errand of mercy.

Magnificently they have stood the rigid tests of their endurance and courage that have followed and have held up the finest traditions of their profession.

This spirit just as truly glows through the letters that come from the nurses on duty in cantonment hospitals. This branch of the service is calling for nurses in greater numbers, practically every week. One of them writes to us from her cantonment:

I have 61 nurses in this base hospital and I believe I am perfectly safe in saying that without one exception there is not a nurse here who would exchange the service or the experience for anything she has ever had before. The nurses are comfortably housed, well fed, courteously treated, not overworked, and they are most loyal and enthusiastic.

Another in this service says:

A few months ago this region was a stretch of wilderness and the first division of men worked this place through to what it is at present. The camp ground occupies some 17,000 acres and the base hospital takes up about 62 acres and has, so far, 32 wards; I think more are in process of construction. We have several surgical wards, a few medical and dental departments, X-ray room, nose, ear and throat section, eye clinic, contagious and tuberculosis divisions; also one ward for mental cases and one ward for sick officers.

Each ward is a barracks by itself. We have now between 600 and 700 patients and a great variety of cases, perhaps more than in any large hospital of a large city. The hospital is perched on a hill-top and below the hill are the drill ground and tents * * *

The nursing duties are the same as in any civil hospital * * * In our rooms we have already our dressers and little rugs; small rockers have arrived, shades, and little scrim curtains, all of which give our rooms a very cozy appearance. We make our own fires in the stoves, but what of it? As long as we have the wood and the coal to make the fire with, the rest is easy. I do not mind it, even though I do get a black spot on my clean uniform once in a while. However, we expect to have our own cook and two maids later to attend to the nurses' home * * *

The nurses who are here now are the most charming group of women I have ever met, and they are all mighty proud to be here. I am wondering by what magic wand the Red Cross manages this selection of nurses, not knowing them personally. The group here represents several states, many cities and I do not know how many hospitals; and yet such a collection of charming young women, and such harmony, and so congenial!

Field Marshal Haig, the British Commander-in-Chief, has, according to the *London Gazette* of December 28, submitted a list of names of persons, among them many Americans, serving on the Western front as deserving special mention. The names of the 12 American women listed, all Red Cross nurses, attached to the Army Nurse Corps, were cabled to this country. We are proud to present them:

B. M. Alexander, Chicago unit; H. Briggs, Lakeside unit, Cleveland; Mrs. J. Christie, Presbyterian Hospital unit, New York; C. Cuppaidge, St. Louis unit; M. Dunlop, University of Pennsylvania unit, Philadelphia; G. M. Gerrard, Harvard University unit; C. Hall, Harvard University unit; H. G. McClelland, Philadelphia unit; L. McKee, Lakeside unit; L. Marsh, Presbyterian Hospital unit; J. C. Stimson, St. Louis unit; D. Urch, Chicago unit.

Sanitary zones have been established in connection with 25 army camps and cantonments, with from one to four nurses in each. These

zones, which extend one mile in every direction around the camp, thus giving an average area of 50 miles, have been a part of the plan for the prevention of the spread of contagion between the camp and civil community, and vice versa. Mary E. Lent, a Red Cross nurse, has been appointed an inspector for this branch of the United States Public Health Service and is making a tour of inspection of these zones.

The annual meeting of the American Red Cross, held December 12 at the Hotel Willard in Washington, differed from former meetings in being strictly devoted to matters of business, and owing to the pressure of events, lasted but one day. For this reason state associations of nurses were not encouraged to send delegates.

In time of peace, the number of nurses employed in the Army and Navy Nurse Corps is limited to the number needed in permanent military hospitals; but in time of war, these corps can of course be greatly expanded. This expansion of the regular service does not, however, in any way relieve the Red Cross Nursing Service of the responsibility of enrolling and supplying reserve nurses for these services, as both rely upon the Red Cross for the majority of the personnel, which supplements at all times the regular corps.

All the nurses assigned to duty in military hospitals become members of the Army and Navy Nurse Corps, and after their assignment to duty are no longer under the supervision or direction of the Red Cross.

We urge upon the nurses of the country the importance of enrollment with the Red Cross and the necessity of signifying promptly their willingness to accept service when needed. Demands will increase as the months go on, and if we are to do our part, nurses as well as others must be willing to make their sacrifice.

RED CROSS NOTES

BY CLARA D. NOYES

The January number of the JOURNAL announced the fact that the Director of the Bureau of Nursing Service had been temporarily detached from the National Office at Washington for the purpose of making a tour of the country to speak to nurses, both pupils and graduates, in order to stimulate enrollment and clear up confusion and misunderstanding concerning the nursing service of the Red Cross and the needs of our country, both now and in the future. Editorial comment in the same number emphasized the urgent need of nurses for cantonment hospitals and spoke of the attitude of many nurses toward Home Service. It has indeed been a great surprise to

find nurses holding out against duty in the cantonment hospitals. On the other hand some were refusing to enroll because they believed they would "be obliged to go abroad," and for various reasons they did not desire to do so. An occasional nurse was deterred from enrolling because she had heard that nurses had "lost their hands or fingers" or been otherwise mistreated. They had also heard that the nurses had no protection, and were returning in large numbers, having fallen victims to the men of our own army. Because of this confusion and misunderstanding it was deemed wise to send someone out from National Headquarters, and Miss Van Blarcom from the Atlantic Division Office.

The Director of the Bureau of Nursing Service left Washington on December 11, proceeding to New York, where several days were spent planning the itinerary for New England. Since that time the following cities have been visited and mass meetings for nurses have been held: Boston, New Bedford, Fall River, Providence, Newport, Worcester, Springfield, Waterbury, New Haven, Greenwich, Bridgeport, Hartford, New York City, Brooklyn, Trenton, Newark and Concord, N. H.

In addition to the large open meetings, committee meetings have been held in all cities. The meetings have been well arranged, and as a rule, the halls have been filled. In several cities the senior classes have attended in uniform, which has added to the interest. Music has been provided in many places, in New York by the band from the Brooklyn Navy Yard. The singing of America and The Star Spangled Banner has been an inspiring part of the program. When possible, an army officer, or occasionally a recruiting officer from the English Army has been invited to speak. This struck the military note which is almost necessary at the present time. The chairman of the local committee has usually presided, although in some instances, the Chapter Chairman has done so, the Chapter, in some places, assuming the responsibility for the meeting. An enrollment booth has been an important part of the preparation. The meetings have been held in public halls. Where such were not available, lecture halls in nurses' residences have been used.

Great interest has been shown in the meetings. For example, at the meeting in Trenton, nurses came from Atlantic City, even though the temperature was well below zero. At Bridgeport nurses came from New London, and so it has been everywhere. They are eager for information, and they are, we believe, ready to serve.

The itinerary for the Director of the Bureau of Nursing Service for the next few weeks is as follows:

January 15, Philadelphia; 18, Albany (afternoon); 18, Troy (evening); 19, Pittsfield (afternoon); 21, Utica; 23, Chicago and probably Milwaukee; 28, Utica; 29, Rochester; 30, Syracuse; February 1, Binghamton. This may be subject to change. The South will probably be visited afterwards. Arrangements are now being made for this trip, and will be published later.

Miss Van Blarcom started her tour by speaking at Wilkes-Barre, at Pittsburgh and in Ohio, but illness has forced her to give up her trip altogether.

The survey now being made by the Committee on Nursing of the Council of National Defense and the American Nurses' Association, which shows the ratio of Red Cross nurses to registered nurses, is proving of great service. For example, a state with 1000 registered nurses has only 57 enrolled in the Red Cross Nursing Service (and there are several with approximately this ratio) shows that the state is not being drained of nurses, neither are the nurses meeting their responsibilities toward the Service. There does not seem to be any reason why the need for nurses in our own country cannot be met. It seems to be a question of adjustment rather than lack of material. For example, if married nurses are not acceptable to the Army or Navy they should be brought into line for work that they can do. Many are going back into hospitals, public health work, and social service, thereby releasing nurses eligible for active duty.

A visit to Camp Devens, Ayer, Mass., on December 10, revealed much of interest. It is a wonderful place. The hospital consists of 75 wards with three and one-half miles of connecting corridors, well heated, and with every modern appliance and up-to-date equipment. The nurses' quarters were most comfortable, a large recreation room with every comfort, including piano, electric tea kettle, writing tables, rugs, wicker chairs, books and magazines. The nurses' mess hall and kitchen were very satisfactory. Miss Jane Molloy is the Chief Nurse. She is also a member of the Red Cross Nursing Service. The quarters of the nurses indicate that she takes the highest interest in the welfare of the nurses and the efficiency of the nursing service.

In connection with the special public health work being done in France under the auspices of the Red Cross a group of thirty Nurses' Aides has been assigned to duty to act as assistants to the nurses. These have been selected from among those who were prepared by the Chief Nurses of the Base Hospitals, and they must not only have had this special preparation, but must be able to speak French fluently in order that they may act as interpreters.